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1962/05/24

SECRET

FROM VIENTIANE TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Cypher/OTP

FOREIGN OFFICE (SECRET) AND
WHITEHALL (SECRET) DISTRIBUTION

Mr. Addis

No. 389
May 24, 1962

D. 11.47 a.m. May 24, 1962
R. 12.27 p.m. May 24, 1962

IMMEDIATE
SECRET

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 389 of May 24.
Repeated for information to Washington
Moscow
and Saving to Paris
U.K.Mission Geneva
Bangkok
Singapore
Canberra

Your telegram No. 3786 to Washington.

Leuam does not have the qualities to be a political leader. He knows this himself and has no such ambition. All politicians here know it too and would never look up to him as their chief. He is no more than a [grp. undec.] administrator.

2. This search for an alternative leader of the Right Wing group is misconceived. It is General Phoumi who controls all the sources of power on this side.

3. Although the defeat at Nam Tha has diminished the value of the armed forces as a political asset he still has exclusive control of the Police, Finance, the Assembly and Press and Radio. He cannot be replaced as leader of the Right Wing unless he can first be separated from these sources of power. No one has yet suggested how this can be done at present. If the Americans, therefore, persist in trying to replace him the attempt will only bring discredit on themselves and will diminish their ability to exercise their influence in those matters in which it could be effective and decisive. The manoeuvre is bound to arouse resentment and suspicion on all sides and will prejudice the chances of a settlement.

3. [sic]. General Phoumi must, therefore, lead his team in the tripartite negotiations and must be made to tie himself into the agreement. And so long as he continues to possess the real power he must continue to play a leading part in carrying the agreement out. After the coalition has been set up

/American

SECRET

American support should be put fully behind Souvanna Phouma, not given to some figure from the Right Wing. This will be the best way to reduce General Phoumi's influence.

Foreign Office pass Immediate to Washington 143, Priority to Bangkok 197, Moscow 99, Singapore 167 and Saving to Paris 78, U.K.Mission Geneva (for Laos delegation) 22 and Canberra 44.

[Repeated as requested to Foreign Service Posts. Copy sent to C.R.O. Telegraph Branch for transmission Saving to Canberra]

ADVANCE COPIES
Private Secretary
Sir H. Caccia
Mr. Peck
Head of South East Asia Department

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